



English Language Vocabulary Development and Instruction

Dr. Kristen Pennycuff Trent





Mr. Olson is a first-grade teacher. He uses thematic units in his class. This week, his class is learning about ocean life. He incorporates content area centers such as social studies, science, and math into his lessons. All these centers consist of tasks that contain literacy skills. As Mr. Olson teaches the math, social studies, and science concepts, he also teaches to the language objectives. Today, his class is learning new words such as hermit crab, symbiosis, camouflage, and schools of fish, and they are introduced through total physical response and the use of realia. Mr. Olson shows his students a real hermit crab. For the phrase "schools of fish," he asks students to act out the movement of schools of fish by moving as a group. He then asks students to write sentences using these new words in their discovery journal. Mr. Olson always ends his lesson by reviewing the vocabulary words as a means of assessing his students' level of comprehension of the concepts.

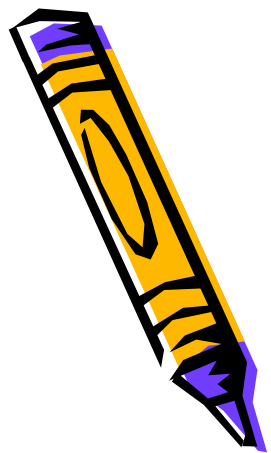
L2 and Vocabulary



- "Research has shown L2 readers rely heavily on vocabulary knowledge, and that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is the largest obstacle for L2 readers to overcome."
 - (Huckin and Bloch, 1993)
- "While correlation does not necessarily imply causality, the fact is that empirical studies have shown that good L2 readers, writers, speakers, and listeners have a more extensive vocabulary under their control".
 - (Folse, 2004)



What is Vocabulary Learning?



- It involves much more than learning individual words in a list.



Five Types of Vocabulary for L2



- Single words, set phrases, variable phrases, phrasal verbs, and idioms
- Examples of single words are
 - animals: alligator, lions;
 - countries: Malaysia, Iran, Brunei;
 - actions in the past: slept, ate, played football;
 - descriptions: excited, sad, lazy.
 - This group also contains multi-word vocabulary such as blackbird, teapot, table scraps, etc.
- Examples of set phrases are
 - in other words, **not** in other terms;
 - the bottom line, **not** the lowest line;
 - all of a sudden, **not** most of a sudden.



Five Types of Vocabulary for L2



- Single words, set phrases, variable phrases, phrasal verbs, and idioms
- An example of a variable phrase is, *It has come to my attention that ...*
- A phrasal verb consists of two or three words.
 - The first word is always a verb and the second is a preposition or particle/adverb. If there's a third word, it is usually a preposition.
 - Examples of phrasal verbs are: put away, put on, put off, come back, come off, come up, come down with.
- Examples of *idioms* are feeling blue, selling like hotcakes, break a leg, etc.



Why is Vocabulary Difficult for ELLs?



- Second language learners experience difficulties in learning L2 vocabularies because the relabeling of concepts they have acquired in the native language with foreign terminologies makes it difficult for them to retrieve the learned words in the target language.



Why is Vocabulary Difficult for ELLs?

L1

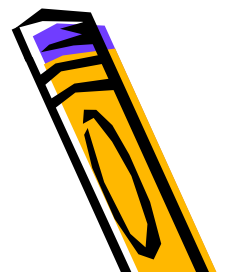
- Learn new words and concepts at the same time.
 - Word form and meaning are inseparable.
 - When see in L1, meaning usually available automatically.
 - When speak in L1, retrieve lexical forms spontaneously and effortlessly.

L2

- Do not have as much contextualized input, which makes extraction and integration difficult.
 - Little need to learn new concepts or meanings for L2 words in early stages of acquisition.
 - Little conceptual or semantic development.
- Existing L1 linguistic and conceptual systems are actively involved.



Four Factors that Contribute to Difficulty



- Confusion over synonyms
 - "My brother is long and thin."
 - Strong tea vs thick tea in Chinese
- Circumlocution in place of exact word as a result of lack of 1-1 correspondence
 - Carrying a baby instead of pregnant
- False cognates
 - *Embrassa* in Spanish means pregnant
- Idiomatic expressions
 - Break a leg, lost his marbles, green with envy



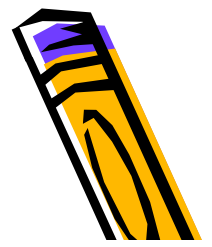
Three Approaches to Vocabulary Development



- Incidental
 - requires teachers to provide opportunities for extensive reading and listening
- Explicit
 - involves diagnosing the words learners need to know, presenting words for the first time, elaborating word knowledge, and developing fluency
- Independent Strategy with known words
 - involves practicing guessing from context and training learners to use dictionaries



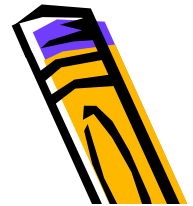
Incidental Learning



- Most words in L1 and L2 are probably learned incidentally through extensive reading and listening.
 - For L1, given a single exposure to an unfamiliar word, there was about a 10% chance of learning its meaning from context.
 - Likewise, L2 learners can be expected to require many exposures to a word in context before understanding its meaning.
 - Several recent studies have corroborated their statement confirming that incidental L2 vocabulary learning through reading does occur.
 - Extensive listening is also found to increase vocabulary learning.



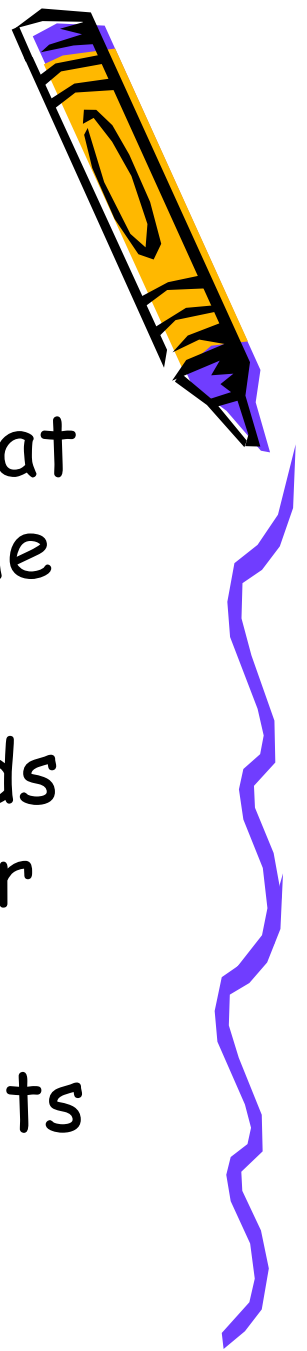
Explicit Instruction



- For L2 entering a university, Laufer (1992) found that knowing a minimum of about 3,000 words was required for effective reading at the university level, whereas knowing 5,000 words indicated likely academic success.
- Coady (1997) proposed that beginners should supplement their extensive reading with study of the 3,000 most frequently used words until the words' form and meaning become automatically recognized (i.e., "sight vocabulary").



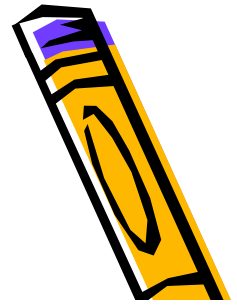
Independent Strategy Development



1. Identify the vocabulary words that students will need to comprehend the reading.
2. Pre-teach only three to five words (more than five words will confuse or bore students).
3. Connect the new words to concepts that students already know .



Problems with Independent Strategy Development



1. The readers' false belief that they know the words
2. The readers' decision to ignore the words
3. The readers' ignorance of the connection between the form of a new word and the meaning contained in the context
4. The readers' inability to infer a word from context
5. The nonrecurrence of new words (i.e., a single encounter of words)



What's Best?

- Explicit instruction is best for beginning and low-intermediate students, whereas high-intermediate and advanced students can learn vocabulary through the use of extensive reading and listening. Training students to use dictionary earlier in the curriculum is highly encouraged.



Robb's Basic Strategy

1. Identify the vocabulary words that students will need to comprehend the reading.

2. Preteach only three to five words.

- More than five words will confuse or bore students.

3. Connect the new words to concepts that students already know.

- For example, to help students grasp the meaning of the word perplexed, link it to the word confused.



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2



1. Students need to hear the pronunciation and practice saying the word aloud in addition to just seeing the form, because the stress patterns of the words are important. Words are stored in the memory in both ways.

2. Students should start learning vocabulary by learning semantically unrelated words. They should avoid learning words with similar forms and closely related meanings at the same time.

- For example, "affect" and "effect" have similar forms and are likely to cause confusion.
- Likewise, words with similar, opposite, or closely associated meanings may interfere with one another if studied at the same time.



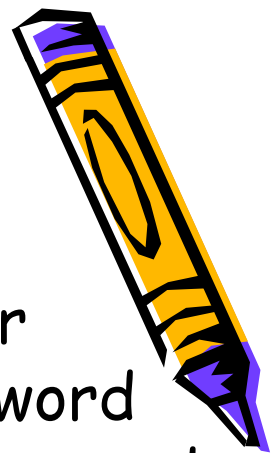
Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2

3. Students should be encouraged to study words regularly over several short sessions instead of studying them for one or two longer sessions. Repetition and review should take place almost immediately after studying a word for the first time.

4. Students should study five to seven words at a time, dividing larger numbers of words into smaller groups. As learners review these five to seven vocabulary cards, they will more quickly get repeated exposure to the words than when larger numbers of words (20-30) are studied.



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2



5. To promote deeper mental processing and better retention, teachers can use activities like the key word technique. Learners remember words better when a word is associated with a visual image.

6. Teachers can add various L2 information to the cards for further elaboration. Learners can consciously associate newly met words with other L2 words that they know and add these words to the card. In addition, they can add sentence examples' parts of speech, definitions, and key word images.



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2

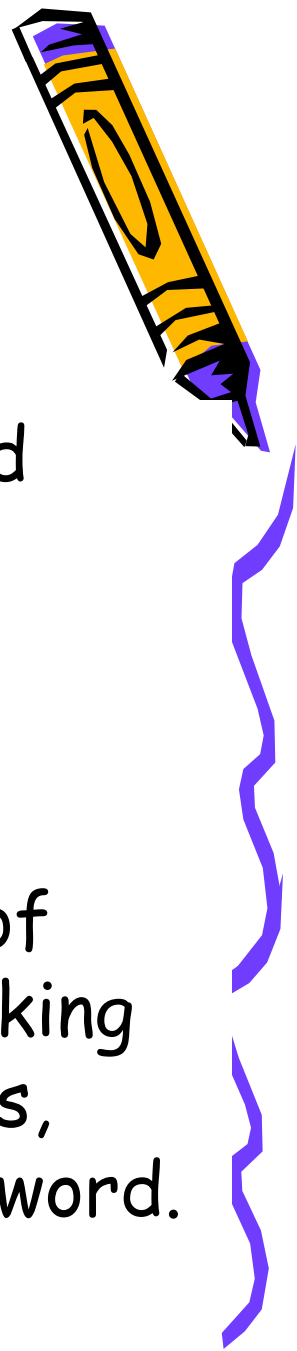


- Teachers should also consider receptive and productive knowledge when teaching vocabulary.
 - Students with receptive knowledge recognize new vocabulary words through reading and listening.
 - Students with productive knowledge can use the vocabulary words through speaking and writing .



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2

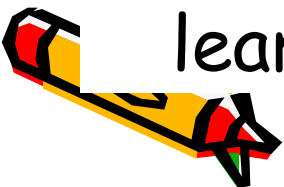
- Students can be taught to elaborate word knowledge by expanding the connections between learners' knowledge and new information.
- Exercises that can deepen students' knowledge of words include sorting lists of words and deciding on the categories; making semantic maps; and generating derivatives, inflections, synonyms, and antonyms of a word.



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2

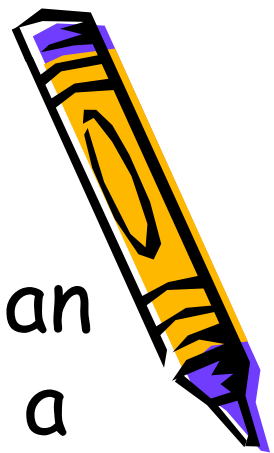


- Beginning-level students may either have no recognition or a very limited amount of word recognition, spoken or written; they also often misuse words, making communicating with others difficult.
- To promote word recognition at this level, teachers can use word families, cognates, and words that have root meaning from students' L1 and adapt the amount of words students learn at a time.

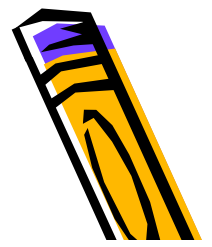


Mnemonic Devices: 9 Types

- 1. Linking the word to the sound of an L1 word, the sound of an L2 word, or a sound of a word in another language.
 - Suppose a student wants to learn the Malay word *bendara* ("flag"), for ex-ample. In remembering the word *bendara*, he/she could think of the English word *banner*, because it has a similar sound.



Mnemonic Devices: 9 Types



2. Attending to the meaning of a part or several parts of a word.

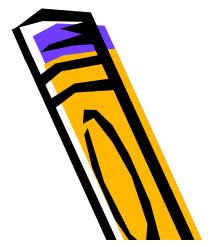
- To remember the Malay word perjalanan ("journey"), a student may associate with part of the word, jalan ("road").

3. Noting the structure of part or all of the word.

- A student may learn the Malay word terbang ("fly") from the already learned word kapalterbang ("airplane").



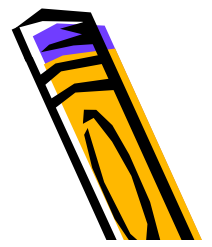
Mnemonic Devices: 9 Types



4. Placing the word in the topic group to which it belongs.
 - These Malay words can be categorized in greetings:
 - Selamat pagi ("Good morning"),
 - Selamat tengahari ("Good afternoon"),
 - Selamat malam ("Good night").
5. Visualizing the word in isolation or in a written context. Visualizing the word in isolation involves remembering of the configuration of the word; for instance, the student can memorize the Malay word *makan* ("eat") by remembering that it has two a's or it has a k in the middle.



Mnemonic Devices: 9 Types



6. Linking the word to the situation in which it appeared.

- A student first heard the Malay word tidur ("sleep") when someone said that Alan sleeps in class. He/she could remember it by remembering the situation in which it was heard and, in this case, the situation of Alan sleeping in class.

7. Creating a mental image. A student can learn the Malay word senyum ("smile") by picturing the image of his/her mom smiling at him/her.



Mnemonic Devices: 9 Types



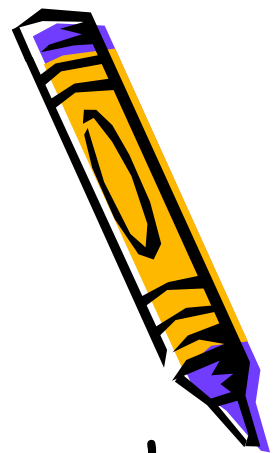
8. Associating some physical sensation to the word.

- A student may remember how faces scrunch up when people eat a sour mango, which then reminds the learner of the Malay word ma- sam ("sour").

9. Associating the word to a keyword.

- The Malay word hujan can be learned by first thinking of the English word "hurricane" as the key word and then have the mental image of the down- pour. To retrieve the meaning of hujan, evoke the word "hurricane," which in turn will reevoked the image of the downpour. This strategy combines strategies 1 and 7.

Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2

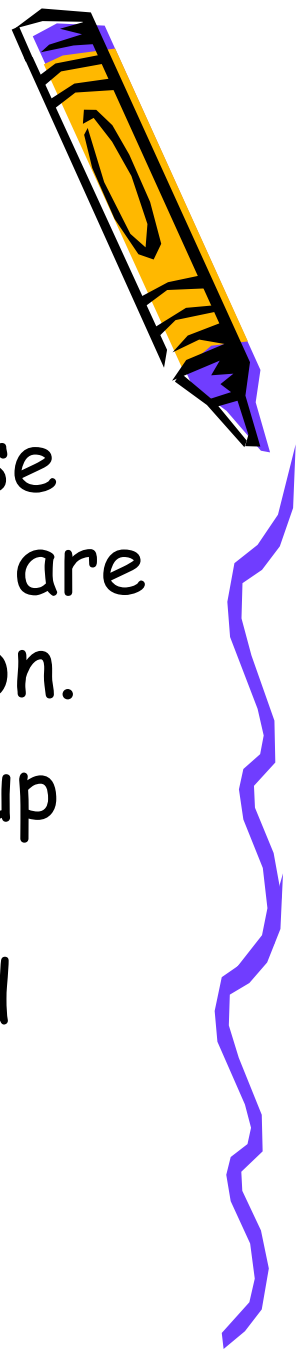


Techniques that teachers can use to teach vocabulary include

- picture flash cards;
- "beep it, write it, and frame it", enrichment packets,
- semantic maps or webs;
- songs and games,
- and teaching vocabulary through TPR.



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2



- Intermediate learners frequently use wrong words, and their vocabularies are inadequate for a smooth conversation.
- Strategies to be used with this group include structural analysis, semantic feature analysis, categorization, and dictionary use.



Tips for Teaching Unfamiliar Vocabulary to L2

- Content area teachers should teach to two objectives: language and content.
- Teachers should use both standardized and alternative assessments to evaluate students' vocabulary development.

